

Message Text

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POUCHED FOR INFOR TO ALL CONSULS IN CANADA

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TAGS PINT CA

SUBJ STANFIELD CALLS FOR TORY PARTY LEADERSHIP CONVENTION

REF OTTAWA A-103, FEBRUARY 25

1. IN JULY 9 LETTER TO PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE (PC) PARTY PRESIDENT MICHAEL MEIGHEN, PC LEADER ROBERT STANFIELD FORMALLY REQUESTED SCHEDULING OF PC LEADERSHIP CONVENTION TO SELECT HIS SUCCESSOR. LONG-EXPECTED ACTION SETS STAGE FOR INFORMAL PC LEADERSHIP JOCKEYING OF PAST SEVERAL MONTHS TO TAKE CONCRETE FORM. CLOSE TO A DOZEN HATS MAY BE IN RING, ALONG LINES OUTLINED REPAIR. ONLY DECLARED CANDIDATE SO FAR IS HEWARD GRAFFTEY, WHO IS GENERALLY GIVEN LITTLE CHANCE. QUEBEC MP CLAUDE WAGNER AND KINGSTON MP FLORA MACDONALD ARE CONSIDERED STRONG CONTENDERS.

2. HOWEVER, SOME PRESS AND POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN OTTAWA NOW CONSIDER THAT ALBERTA PREMIER PETER LOUGHEED WILL SEEK LEADERSHIP AND WILL WIN HANDS DOWN. INDICATIONS TO THIS EFFECT ARE: FACT THAT IN EARLY MAY LOUGHEED RESERVED PENTHOUSE FLOOR OF OTTAWA'S SKYLINE HOTEL FOR BOTH NOVEMBER AND FEBRUARY DATES THEN BEING TALKED OF FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONVENTION (PRESS NOW REPORTS FEBRUARY 19-22 IN OTTAWA

LIKELIEST CONVENTION DATES AND PLACE); FACT THAT LOUGHEED HAS RESHUFFLED HIS PERSONAL STAFF TO INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS OF PROVEN POLITICAL ORGANIZING TALENT; FACT THAT LOUGHEED ADDRESSED PC NATIONAL CAUCUS IN EARLY JUNE WITH SPEECH WHICH PORTRAYED HIM AS LEADER CONCERNED ABOUT NATIONAL RATHER THAN JUST PROVINCIAL ISSUES; FACT HE IS REPORTEDLY STUDYING FRENCH; FACT THAT HIS AGE (47) AND PRESENT STATUS AS VOTE-GETTER (PC WON 69 OF 75 SEATS IN RECENT ALBERTA PROVINCIAL ELECTION) SUGGEST THAT IF HE EVER ASPIRES TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA HE MUST ACT NOW TO SECURE PC LEADERSHIP; LEADER ELECTED IN 1976 WOULD PRESUMABLY STAY IN OFFICE THROUGH AT LEAST NEXT TWO FEDERAL ELECTIONS BY WHICH TIME LOUGHEED CANNOT COUNT ON HAVING POLITICAL BASE AND STATURE HE NOW ENJOYS AND FURTHERMORE WILL PROBABLY BE PUSHING 60.

3. THERE HAS BEEN SOME SPECULATION THAT FINANCE MINISTER JOHN TURNER, DENIED PRIME MINISTERSHIP AS LONG AS TRUDEAU REMAINS AND ALLEGEDLY IDEOLOGICALLY CLOSER TO TORIES THAN LIBERALS, MIGHT SWITCH TO PC AND SEEK LEADERSHIP. WE DISCOUNT THIS AS PIPEDREAM OF TORIES LONGING BOTH FOR STAR ATTRACTION AND SPLIT IN LIBERAL LEADERSHIP.

JOHNSON

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